

TOWN OF NORTH
Council Meeting
September 12, 2005
7:30 p.m.
North Town Hall

Attending: Mayor Jeffcoat, Council members Cook, Drew, Gleaton and Lane
Administrator Ott, Chief Fallaw and Beth Kincaid, Town Clerk.

Guests: Jim Reed, President, Southland Sanitation

Mayor Jeffcoat called the general meeting of the North Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. and declared a quorum. Visitors and guests were welcomed. Mr. Drew was welcomed back from vacation.

Jeffcoat noted agenda item "Public Comments" has been moved to the top of the agenda so citizens could ask questions or address Council with any concerns about agenda items early on, rather than waiting until the end of the meeting. Three minutes for comment is allowed and citizens have 1 ½ minutes at the end of the meeting for questions.

Jeffcoat called for approval of the Minutes from the August 9, 2005 meeting. Drew made the motion seconded by Cook and approved unanimously by Council.

It was noted that a special presentation would be given by Mr. Jim Reed, president of Southland Sanitation later on the agenda.

Jeffcoat called for the Water/Sewer report.

Mr. Ott gave the following report:

- 121 penalties, down slightly from last month; 11 cut-offs/cut on's; 10 new accounts; checked four (4) meter readings; 27 water leaks – this is an all time high for the Town. Attributed to possible treatment issues – we were trying a new treatment method but have decided to return to the old way. Could be all of the lines going at the same time. Four sewer line issues because of problems with pumper.
- Other jobs performed – scraped weeds around Town, filled two (2) potholes, completed installation of water line at new housing development – testing complete and is online. Repairs at Wolf Crossing complete – the center pivot is now operational.

Additional information:

- Highway 178 Water Project/Sewer Extension – 1% Penny Sales Tax being used to fund this project. Robert Hutto was low bidder. Project has begun and should take about three (3) weeks.
- Bids on Town Vehicles – Sealed bids were received through August 23, 2005 for purchase of the backhoe, two trucks and the chipper. The chipper bids did not reach the reserve asking price. The backhoe sold for \$6,725; red truck \$400; dump truck \$1,000. Profits from the sales will be used to purchase a new backhoe.

- A new lawn mower and trailer have been purchased to cut grass around the town. Leonard Jones, our new employee groundskeeper, is doing a good job keeping the grounds cut.

Jeffcoat called for the Police report.

Chief Fallaw gave the following report:

- Total Group A, B & C calls in August totaled 121. This is down from 156 in July. 77% of the calls were department generated. Out of the 51 Group A offenses, eight (8) were alcohol related, 13 narcotics violations, and 16 traffic offenses (repetitive – DUI's, no insurance, driving under suspension). Fallaw pointed out the Assaulting a Police Officer offense resulted in an officer giving chase and the offender turning on officer. The offender was subdued with a baton. TASERS Groups B & C alcohol and drugs were the main offenses resulting in arrests. A Check Point on was conducted on August 13 & 14 with Norway, Springfield, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Department and SC Department of Natural Resources. Thirteen arrests were made, 11 of which were drug-related. Confiscated 28g of methamphetamine, 5g crack cocaine, and 3g of powdered cocaine and 1/2lb of marijuana.
- Officers worked 542 man hours – Court, 42.4 hours, training, 13.5 hours, and reserve officer, 31.5 hours. Applications are currently being accepted for a second reserve officer, with training for that person scheduled for spring, 2006. All police vehicles are operational.
- Sound Equipment for Courtroom/Council Chambers – one bid received for sound equipment and installation of sound system; waiting on second bid
- Vacant Lot/Abandoned Vehicles Ordinances
 - Town broken into quadrants along Highways 178 and 321 for ease of notification and enforcement.
 - Approximately 35 uninhabitable abandoned houses/vacant lots targeted.
 - Owners are being notified in writing and have 90 days to comply. Providing owners with names of companies in Orangeburg that demolish or clean up properties (Braxton Hauling and CP Construction). If owners fail to comply within the 90 days, they will be notified again.
 - Council has determined this to be a criminal rather than civil matter. The goal is to work with the owners. If they are making progress, we will work with them and they will not be cited. If they do not, a citation will be issued, followed by an arrest. If an arrest is made, a fine in the amount of \$1,087.50 per day will be imposed until the property is brought into compliance. The Police are committed to enforcing the ordinances

Councilman Gleaton stated his support of the ordinances and expressed his appreciation of the police enforcement. He said that the owners need to know we are serious about getting these properties cleaned up.

- Fallaw also reported on the abandoned vehicle ordinance. Offenders are sent letters explaining the options for repairing, fencing in, or moving vehicles. Also, a list of five (5) towing companies is provided. An appeal was filed in Orangeburg regarding abandoned vehicles – North prevailed and received a directed verdict.

Fallaw advised Council that a book listing the properties and abandoned vehicles is being maintained, and reflects the actions take and status on both relative to the applicable ordinances.

Councilwoman Lane voiced her appreciation of the fine work of the Chief and the police department. She also commended Sherryl Peters, our representative news reporter, for the excellent coverage she provides the Town and Council.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Financial Report**
Jeffcoat presented the financial report. Starting balance for August was \$135,735.02, ending balance \$125,740.92 and income \$69,491.18.
- **Highway 321 Project**
Mr. Steele was not able to attend the meeting. Jeffcoat reported the lane switch has been successful and the project work was on time. A business owner asked about the availability of parking and access to businesses. Mr. Ott assured her it would. He asked that she meet with him after the meeting to get more information.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals**
Mr. Ott reported the Board met for the first time in August. Board members include Mr. Randy Hughes, Chairman, Ms. Rose Stroman, Mr. Jeff Holstein, Mr. Charles Guy and Ms. Leolise Jamison. The Board discussed the duties of the Board and reviewed and approved a proposal from Hightower Cellular to construct a cellular tower on Mr. Valentine's land, just outside of Town. Approval was needed from the Board because of a height variance. The tower will support five (5) cellular carriers, and Cingular Wireless has already requested required paperwork.
- Mr. Jeffcoat reported there were no write-in candidates for Mayor on Council so we will not have a general election.
- **Southland Sanitation** – Mr. Jeffcoat introduced Jim Reed, president of Southland. Mr. Reed thanked Council for an opportunity to speak. He stated he is the owner of Southland, which is the largest privately owned garbage collection company. Southland purchased the North trash contracts from Waste Management and has been running the routes for about a month.

Councilwoman Lane asked if Southland would assist the elderly and disabled by picking up their cans. Mr. Reed said anyone needing assistance should notify the Town and Southland would be happy to assist them.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Consideration of Change in Election Ordinance**

Mr. Jeffcoat called for a first reading to revise the portion of the Election Ordinance that requires candidates to file for office by submitting petitions. If passed, candidates will only have to file a statement of candidacy and no longer submit a petition. Also, the motion would include moving from the majority requirement to the plurality requirement for elections.

Mr. Ott noted an amendment would be required to the current election ordinance. There was discussion regarding the benefits of each method. Ms. Lane made a motion to amend the election ordinance as described above. Motion seconded by Mr. Drew and approved unanimously by Council.

- Request for Gratis Water Tap, Meter and Water Service

Mr. Jeffcoat stated a townsperson had requested water and sewer service be set up and provided free-of-charge for potential evacuees to the Town of North in a designated area of North. There was discussion about the use of tax payer monies to support persons outside of the Town when there are townspeople who have difficulties paying their water bills. Jeffcoat reported number of people from the community have already made donations of money and time to the relief effort.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Lane, seconded by Councilman Gleaton and passed unanimously to deny gratis water taps and services to a townsperson for potential evacuees.

Mayor Jeffcoat reported he participated on a team of 12 volunteers from the United Methodist Churches who went to Mississippi to assist hurricane victims. They completed 22 jobs, cutting and removing 125 trees, as well as other cleaning and repair jobs.

- The Community of Character trait for the month is Safety.
- Jeffcoat read a letter from the Orangeburg Chamber of Commerce. They are hosting a breakfast on Wednesday 9/14/2005 to talk about hurricane relief in the Gulf area. A citizen pointed out the Town of Springfield has challenged other towns to donated \$500. It was agreed the mayor will attend the breakfast and find out the details.

Mr. Jeffcoat called for comments from the public.

- A concerned business manager asked about access for customers due to the 321 project. Mr. Jeffcoat assured her entrances would not be blocked. Mr. Ott offered to have the project manager meet with her to discuss her concerns.
- Citizens asked for clarification regarding the trash burning in the Town and the policy on jay walking. Chief Fallaw stated there is an ordinance against burning trash in Town. Jay walking is an offense and a person could be cited and charged; however, with the ongoing 321 Project jay walking may be hard to avoid. Citizens are asked to be careful in crossing the streets

Reverend Wright was called upon to close with prayer. The Reverend reminded everyone of the Day of Prayer and Fasting on November 13, 2005, which will be celebrated at North United Methodist Church from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Guest speakers will be Russell Ott, Anita Guess, and Ben Tanner. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Joe Gleaton at 247-5591. Mr. Jeffcoat reminded everyone the dedication at the new Baptist Church will be September 18, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. Reverend Wright closed the general session in prayer.

Ms. Cook made a motion to move into Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Gleaton and unanimously approved.

Council returned to general session at 8:45 p.m. The following motions were approved:

- Lane made the motion, Drew seconded and Council approved unanimously to purchase the backhoe for \$16,500, with the purchase to be made out of savings.
- Lane made the motion and Drew seconded, and Council unanimously approved to have Cal continue as waster water treatment operator.
- Drew made the motion seconded by Cook and approved by Council that Police are allowed to purchase meals once a month during Check Point stops.

Council adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Kincaid